Fertilizers has submitted a fresh proposal to the Union Government for revamping of Durgapur Plant of HFCL and Sindri Plant of FCIL, with Coal Bed Methane;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether the same has been deliberated upon and the decision taken by the Cabinet; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps being proposed for revival of these plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The Government has decided to close down the Durgapur plant of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. and Sindri plant of Fertilizer Corporation of India Ltd. as the same have not been found techno-economically viable. The use of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) as feed stock is not possible in the near future.

Restarting of HFCL and FCI Plants

1077. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article published in 'The Statesman' dated the 27th October, 2002 under the caption, "Bangla Ready to Sell Gas to India"; and

(b) if so, the steps being initiated by Government to use this Gas for restarting the HFCL & FCI Plants, located in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of Bangladesh has not taken any decision about export of natural gas to India.

Pruning the fertilizer subsidy

1078. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whetehr it is a fact that Government have decided to prune fertilizer subsidy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Governments have been taken into confidence before taking a final view; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) Government continues to provide subsidy on urea, a controlled fertilizer and concession and decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers in order to make fertilizers available to farmers at affordable prices. While subsidy payments to urea manufacturing units are made under the Retention Price Scheme, payments of concession to manufacturers of decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers are made under the Concession Scheme. Government is in the process of formulation of a new pricing policy for urea units keeping in view the recommendations of Expenditure Reforms Commission for replacing the existing Retention Price Scheme. Government had circulated the ERC report for eliciting the views of the State Governments on the ERC report and some of the State Governments had furnished their views/suggestions.

Revamping of HFCL

1079. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that West Bengal Government has sent a proposal for revamping of HFCL Durgapur Unit, with Coal Bed Methane (CBM) as feed stock; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard and whether the Union Government's decision dated 5th September, 2002 to close down the Durgapur Plant, is being reviewed; if not, the reasons for non-consideration of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, the Government has decided to close down the Durgapur unit of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Ltd. as the same has not been found techno-economically viable. The use of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) as feed stock is not possible in the near future.

Disinvesting the National Fertilizer Company

1080. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Fertilizer Company has been playing crucial role in providing nutrients to the farmers timely at reasonable prices;